

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MONROV 03514 191717Z

ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4814

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONROVIA 3514

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PGOV, LI

SUBJECT: NEW PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTMENTS

REF: MONROVIA 1022

1. ON MAY 18 THE GOVT. OF LIBERIA ANNOUNCED THE APPOINTMENT OF FLORENCE CHENOWETH AS MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE REPLACING THE DISMISSED LOUIS RUSS. ROBERT TUBMAN, DEPUTY MINISTER OF JUSTICE, TOLD THE ACTING DCM MAY 19 THAT THE DISMISSAL OF RUSS WAS THE RESULT OF AN INVESTIGATION CONDUCTED BY THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE WHICH SHOWED THAT RUSS, IN COLLUSION WITH A SUBORDINATE, HAD DIVERTED IBRD FUNDS TO HIS PERSONAL USE. TUBMAN SAID THAT SUSPICIONS OF RUSS HAD BEEN AROUSED IN RECENT MONTHS AS A RESULT OF HIS PURCHASE OF A NUMBER OF EXPENSIVE AUTOMOBILES, THE TOTAL VALUE OF WHICH APPROACHED \$100,000.

2. COMMENT: FEW WILL REGRET THE DISMISSAL OF RUSS. RUSS WAS A DRUNKARD AND A RASCIST. MOST OF HIS STAFF FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO WORK WITH HIM, AS DID THOSE OFFICIAL AMERICANS IN CONTACT WITH HIM. FLORENCE CHENOWETH, AN M.A. IN AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN, IS CONSIDERED BY THOSE WHO WORK WITH HER TO BE DYNAMIC, ABLE AND HONEST. (SEE REFTTEL.)

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MONROV 03514 191717Z

3. ON MAY 19 THE GOVT. OF LIBERIA ANNOUNCED THE DISMISSAL OF WILLIAM APPLETON, DIRECTOR OF CITY AND TOWN PLANNING IN THE MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, FOR "PADDING THE PAYROLL AND CONVERTING GOVERNMENT PROPERTY TO PRIVATE USE. THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT NOTED THAT THE CHARGES AGAINST APPLETON WERE THE RESULT OF A REPORT BY A "CONCERNED CITIZEN" TO THE NATIONAL FORCE FOR THE ERADICATION OF CORRUPTION

WHICH THEN INVESTIGATED THE MATTER.

4. THE FOLLOWING APPOINTMENTS WERE ANNOUNCED SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH THAT OF FLORENCE CHENOWETH: PANDORA E. JOHNSON, DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL, GENERAL SERVICES AGENCY; CHARLES B. HARRIS, ASSISTANT MINISTER OF DEFENSE FOR CIVIL WORKS; EDWIN JARWE YARNGO, COMMISSIONER OF INTERNATIONAL REVENUE, MINISTRY OF FINANCE; GERALD F. COOPER, COMMISSIONER OF MARITIME AFFAIRS; MINISTRY OF FINANCE; GEOGRE K. DUNYE, COMPTROLLER, MINISTRY OF FINANCE; JOHN H. B. STEWART SR., TOWNSHIP COMMISSIONER OF LARKATA TOWNSHIP, GIBI TERRITORY; SANGBA COLE, TOWNSHIP COMMISSIONER, BORLOLA TOWNSHIP, GIBI TERRITORY AND ROBERT RICHARDSON, TOWNSHIP COMMISSIONER, CINTA TOWNSHIP, GIBI TERRITORY. (COMMENT: PANDORA JOHNSON, PRIOR TO HER NEW APPOINTMENT, WAS COORDINATOR AT THE EXECUTIVE MANSION. SHE WAS FORMERLY ASSISTANT MINISTER OF LANDS AND MINES.)
SADLER

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